REMARKS

This Amendment is filed in response to the Office Action dated March 21, 2008. For the following reasons this application should be allowed and the case passed to issue. No new matter is introduced by this amendment. The amendments to claims 1 and 5 are supported by the specification, including page 1, lines 34-35 and page 7, lines 9-12. Cancelled claim 27 supports the amendment to claim 24.

Claims 1-11 and 19-26 are pending in this application. Claims 1-11 and 19-27 were rejected. Claims 1, 5, and 24 are amended in this response. Claims 12-18 were previously cancelled. Claim 27 is cancelled in this response.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103

Claims 1-4 and 24-26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (b) as being anticipated by Johnson (US 6,124,051).

Claim 27 was rejected 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Johnson.

Claims 5-11 and 19-23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Johnson in view of St. Pierre (WO 01/48846).

These rejections are traversed, and reconsideration and withdrawal thereof respectfully requested. The following is a comparison between the present invention as claimed and the cited prior art.

An aspect of the invention, per claim 1, is a fuel cell assembly comprising a fuel cell stack formed by laminating a plurality of cells and plus and minus current extraction sections. The current extraction sections extracting current generated by the fuel cell stack and sandwiching the fuel cell stack with respect to the direction of lamination. Each current extraction section comprising a current extraction plate which is fixed to an end cell positioned

on an end of the fuel cell stack so as to extract the generated current, and an end plate for uniformly binding the cells of the fuel cell stack. A passage allowing flow of a fluid during startup of the fuel cell stack at a temperature below freezing, is provided for at least one of the current extraction plate and the end plate.

Another aspect of the invention, per claim 5, is a fuel cell system comprising a fuel cell assembly comprising a fuel cell stack formed by laminating a plurality of cells and plus and minus current extraction sections. The current extraction sections extract current generated by the fuel cell stack and sandwich the fuel cell stack with respect to the direction of lamination. Each current extraction section comprises a current extraction plate which is fixed to an end cell positioned on an end of the fuel cell stack so as to extract the generated current, and an end plate for uniformly binding the cells of the fuel cell stack. A passage allowing flow of a fluid during startup of the fuel cell stack at a temperature below freezing, is provided for at least one of the current extraction plate and the end plate. A heating device heats the passage for the fluid.

Another aspect of the invention, per claim 24, is a fuel cell assembly comprising a fuel cell stack formed by laminating a plurality of cells and plus and minus current extraction sections. The current extraction sections extract current generated by the fuel cell stack and sandwich the fuel cell stack with respect to the direction of lamination. Each current extraction section comprises a current extraction plate which is fixed to an end cell positioned on an end of the fuel cell stack so as to extract the generated current, and an end plate for uniformly binding the cells of the fuel cell stack. An enclosed cavity confines fluid therein formed in at least one of the current extraction sections. The end plate is formed from a material which has a lower coefficient of thermal conductivity than a material for forming the current extraction plate.

Johnson does not anticipate or render obvious the claimed the fuel cell assemblies and fuel cell system because Johnson does not disclose or suggest a fuel cell assembly or fuel cell system comprising a passage allowing flow of a fluid during startup of the fuel cell stack at a temperature below freezing, provided for at least one of the current extraction plate and the end plate, as required by claims 1 and 5; and an end plate formed from a material which has a lower coefficient of thermal conductivity than a material for forming the current extraction plate, as required by claim 24.

According to Johnson, as the high-temperature oxidant gas flows, it picks up moisture from the product water to reduce the accumulated product water in the cathode plate. The coolant flows to exchange heat between high-temperature cathode gas and the coolant. A coolant flows in the vicinity of the cathode gas openings of the bus plate 14 such that the waste heat flows from top to bottom of the stack while oxidant gas flows from the bottom toward the top. It would not have been obvious to one of skill in the art to allow flow of the coolant (fluid) in the turnaround grooves 29 of the bus plate 14 of Johnson during startup of the fuel cell stack at a temperature below freezing, because high-temperature oxidant gas does not exist at a temperature below freezing. Accordingly, as regards independent claims 1 and 5, Johnson fails to disclose a passage allowing flow of a fluid during startup of the fuel cell stack at a temperature below freezing, provided for at least one of the current extraction plate and the end plate.

St. Pierre does not cure the deficiencies of Johnson. St. Pierre discloses increasing the temperature of the single cells (not the current extraction plate or end plate) by supplying the single cells with high-temperature gas. Thus, the arrangements of the St. Pierre and Johnson devices and their objectives are very different from those of the present invention. Combining

the teachings of St. Pierre with Johnson would not suggest the claimed fuel cell assemblies and fuel cell system.

As regards claim 24, Johnson fails to disclose an enclosed cavity for confining fluid therein formed in at least one of the current extraction sections. In Johnson, a coolant must circulate to cool the bus plate 14 and the cells 15. If the coolant is enclosed in a cavity, the temperature of the coolant would become the same temperature as the cathode gas and the effect of Johnson's invention cannot be obtained. Furthermore, Johnson fails to disclose that the end plate is formed from a material which has a lower coefficient of thermal conductivity than a material for forming the current extraction plate.

According to the present disclosure, by forming the end plate with a material which has a lower coefficient of thermal conductivity than the material used in the current extraction plate in addition to providing the above enclosed cavity for confining fluid therein, it is possible to improve thermal insulation of the fuel cell assembly.

The factual determination of lack of novelty under 35 U.S.C. § 102 requires the disclosure in a single reference of each element of a claimed invention. *Helifix Ltd. v. Blok-Lok Ltd.*, 208 F.3d 1339, 54 USPQ2d 1299 (Fed. Cir. 2000); *Electro Medical Systems S.A. v. Cooper Life Sciences, Inc.*, 34 F.3d 1048, 32 USPQ2d 1017 (Fed. Cir. 1994); *Hoover Group, Inc. v. Custom Metalcraft, Inc.*, 66 F.3d 399, 36 USPQ2d 1101 (Fed. Cir. 1995); *Minnesota Mining & Manufacturing Co. v. Johnson & Johnson Orthopaedics, Inc.*, 976 F.2d 1559, 24 USPQ2d 1321 (Fed. Cir. 1992); *Verdegaal Bros. v. Union Oil Co. of California*, 814 F.2d 628, 631, 2 USPQ2d 1051 (Fed. Cir. 1987). Because Johnson does not disclose a fuel cell assembly or fuel cell system comprising a passage allowing flow of a fluid during startup of the fuel cell stack at a temperature below freezing, provided for at least one of the current extraction plate and the end

plate, as required by claims 1 and 5; and an end plate formed from a material which has a lower coefficient of thermal conductivity than a material for forming the current extraction plate, as required by claim 24, Johnson does not anticipate claims 1, 5, and 24.

Obviousness can be established by combining or modifying the teachings of the prior art to produce the claimed invention where there is some teaching, suggestion, or motivation to do so found either explicitly or implicitly in the references themselves or in the knowledge readily available to one of ordinary skill in the art. *In re Kotzab*, 217 F.3d 1365, 1370 55 USPQ2d 1313, 1317 (Fed. Cir. 2000); *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071, 5 USPQ2d 1596 (Fed. Cir. 1988); *In re Jones*, 958 F.2d 347, 21 USPQ2d 1941 (Fed. Cir. 1992). There is no suggestion in Johnson or St. Pierre to modify the fuel cell assembly and fuel cell system of Johnson to include a passage allowing flow of a fluid during startup of the fuel cell stack at a temperature below freezing, provided for at least one of the current extraction plate and the end plate, as required by claims 1 and 5; and an end plate formed from a material which has a lower coefficient of thermal conductivity than a material for forming the current extraction plate, as required by claim 24, nor does common sense dictate such modifications. The Examiner has not provided any evidence that there would be any obvious benefit in making such modifications of Johnson. *See KSR Int'l Co. v. Teleflex, Inc.*, 500 U.S. ____ (No. 04-1350, April 30, 2007) at 20.

The only teaching of the claimed fuel cell assemblies and fuel cell system is found in Applicant's disclosure. However, the teaching or suggestion to make a claimed combination and the reasonable expectation of success must not be based on applicant's disclosure. *In re Vaeck*, 947 F.2d 488, 20 USPQ2d 1438 (Fed. Cir. 1991).

The dependent claims are allowable for at least the same reasons as the respective independent claims from which they depend and further distinguish the claimed methods.

In light of the above Remarks and Amendments, this application should be allowed and the case passed to issue. If there are any questions regarding these remarks or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated to expedite prosecution of the application.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 500417 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

McDERMOTT WILL & EMERY LLP

Bernard P. Codd

Bernard P. Codd
Registration No. 46,429

600 13th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20005-3096
Phone: 202.756.8000 BPC:MWE
Facsimile: 202.756.8087
Date: June 20, 2008

Please recognize our Customer No. 20277 as our correspondence address.